



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

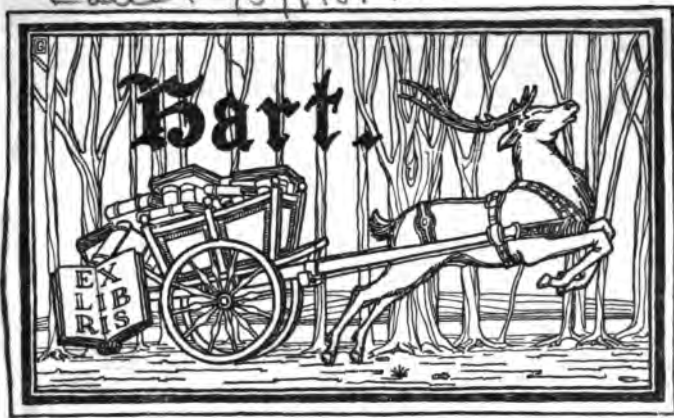
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

AMERICA FIRST



FRANCES
NEMMO GREENE

Educ 759.18.432



Albert Bushnell Hart

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY



THE GIFT OF
ALBERT BUSHNELL HART
OF CAMBRIDGE

Class of 1880

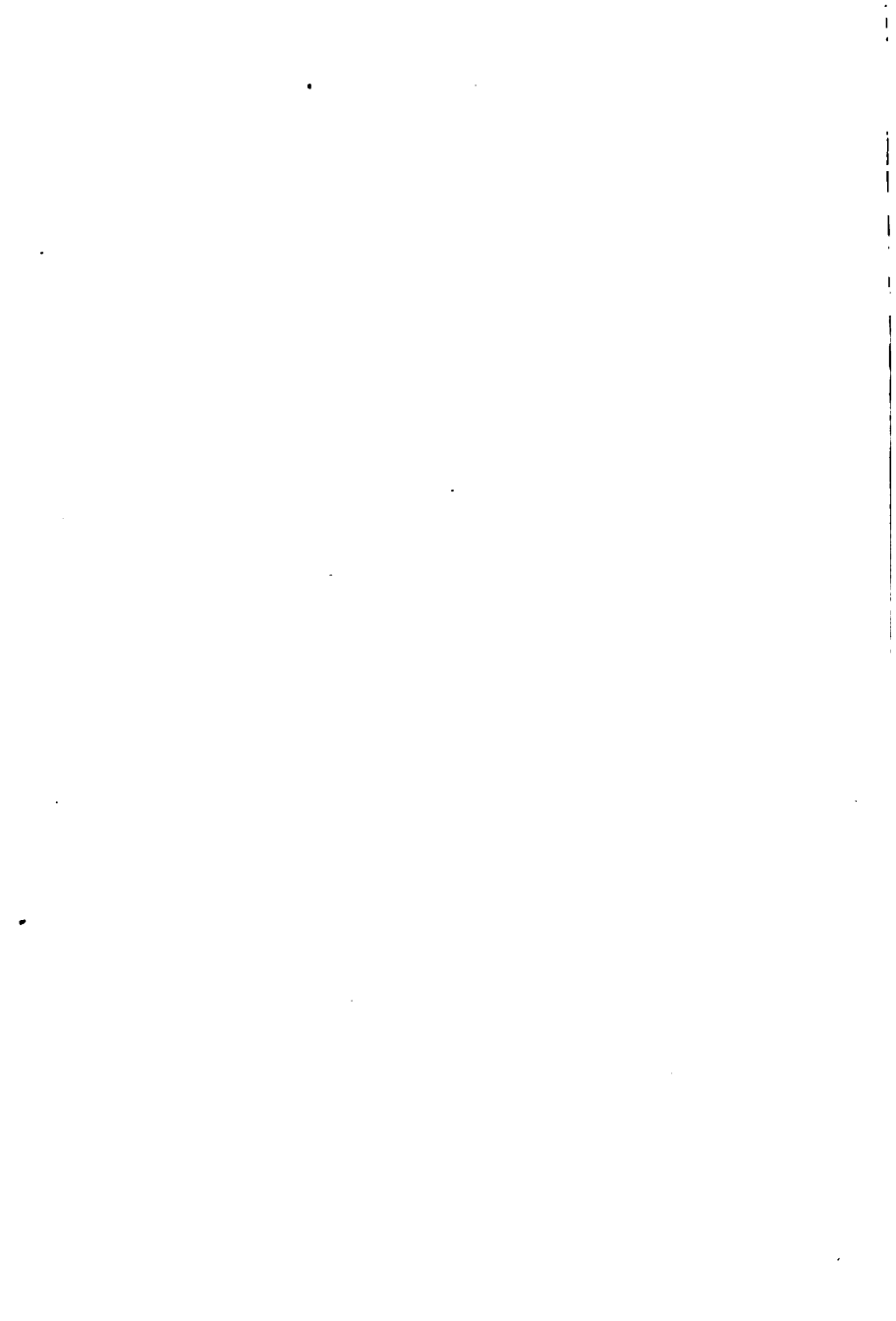
J.L.B.

Property of
Directors of the
Lawrence Plan



3 2044 081 500 456

AMERICA FIRST







"I wouldn't go when you dared me to," said the tenderfoot, "but this is—different." And he added in his heart:
'This is for *my* country.' [Page 23.]

AMERICA FIRST

BY

FRANCES NIMMO GREENE

ILLUSTRATED BY

T. DE THULSTRUP

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

NEW YORK

CHICAGO

BOSTON

Fd. 111-750.18.435
✓

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
GIFT OF
ALBERT BOSWELL HUNT
DEC 5 1923

COPYRIGHT, 1918, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS



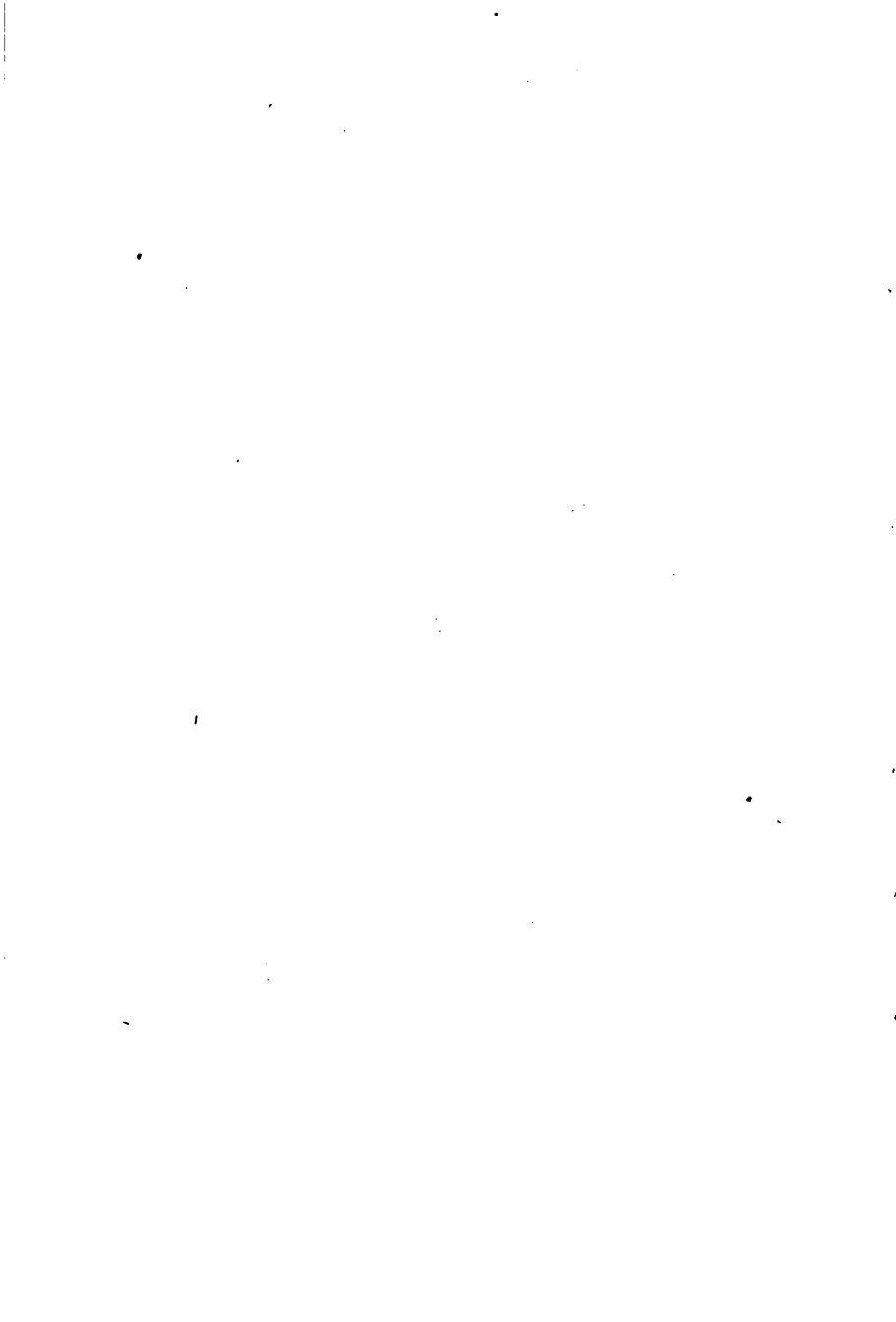
B

TO MY MOTHER'S NAMESAKE
AND MY OWN
VIRGINIA OWEN GREENE AND
FRANCES NIMMO GREENE



CONTENTS

	PAGE
CALLED TO THE COLORS	1
UNDER THE FLAG	53
AMERICA FIRST	89



ILLUSTRATIONS

"I wouldn't go when you dared me to," said the tenderfoot, "but this is—different." And he added in his heart: "This is for *my country*" . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

A man was sitting over some sort of instrument . . . 36

"You can't touch Rudolph!" she cried. "He's under the flag!" 86

"Riego Yañez," he said, "I am proud to shake hands with an American hero!" 120



CALLED TO THE CO

THIS is the story of a "tenderfoot" pink-cheeked, petted lad, and his first service as a Boy Scout.

Danny Harding was what his friends termed "wonderfully fortunate." Danny himself took quite another view of his life's circumstances as he hurried from school one afternoon, an hour before the regular time for dismissal.

The day was golden with sunshine, but the boy's spirit was dark. There was no music in the air and singing in the tree tops, and the heart which pounded against his uniform jacket were silent rage and despair.

The Whippoowill Patrol had been called to the colors, and he the untried, untested tenderfoot would have to remain at home in luxurious security, while the other brown, less-sheltered lads answered the country's call. It was beyond the

a boy's heart to endure—the mortification—the wild despair of it! They would call him a slacker, a *coward!* But, worse still, his country needed him, and he could not answer!

Danny brushed away the tears which threatened to blind him, and stumbled on.

The call had come through a telegram from the Scout Master to the boys while they were yet at school, and the teacher had promptly dismissed them to service. The Whippoorwills were to leave immediately upon an expedition to the mountains, but just what duty they were called to perform was not stated in the brief message. All they knew was that they were to leave at once for a certain distant mountain-top, there pitch tents and await orders for serious service.

On receipt of the news the other boys had rushed off noisily with eager joy to don their khaki uniforms and make ready, but Danny had slipped down a by-street—a wounded, a hurt thing, trying to hide his anguish away from mortal sight. He would not be allowed

· CALLED TO THE COLORS

to go—he knew it—for he was the only son of a widowed mother who loved him very well. He was her all, her idol, and all her life had been spent in pampering and indulging him.

Only a week before, the scouts had taken a hike together and she had reluctantly allowed Danny to accompany her. If the sun would be too hot, he would be poisoned with wild ivy, he would catch malaria, or imbibe fever germs from the mountain air.

No, thought the miserable being, I will not be doubly fearful, doubly unwilling to go. The Whippoorwills were to do duty on Death Head Mountain tonight.

Danny's soul raged against her. He stumbled up the side step of the porch, some home and entered his room.

He did not fly to her arms as she expected to do, but, instead, flung himself into the first convenient chair with a groan. He could not trust himself to speak. But even in that moment

realized that his mother had not hurried to him for the usual kiss. She was struggling with some sort of bundle, and she only looked up with a quick smile.

The next instant, however, the smile of welcome died out of her face, and she stopped suddenly and regarded him with a startled question in her eyes.

Danny frowned more darkly, and moved uneasily under her searching gaze. He looked away in a vain attempt to hide the tears which had sprung to his eyes.

And then came the unexpected:

“Danny,” said his mother, in a voice that sounded new to him, “I received a long-distance phone message from the Scout Master, and—he said he had wired to the school——”

She paused a moment, and then asked: “Didn’t you get the message?”

“Yes,” said the boy doggedly.

There was a pause, and then his mother deliberately put down the bundle she had been working with, and approached. She

CALLED TO THE CO

came and stood before him, v
the table as if for support.
look up into her face, thou
white, jewelled hands graspi
the table, and they were strai

“My son,” she said, “wha
with you?”

He was too full to answer.

“Danny,” she began again
in that new voice, “you won’t
you will not!” And then suc
jewelled hand was struck fie
table, and the new voice c
sionately:

“Daniel Harding, if you s
cry like a baby when you ar
service of your country, I’ll—
sir!”

“Mother!” And Danny
arms.

There were a few momen
laughing confession from Dan
his mother explained to him h
change of attitude toward scout

—yes, of course she knew that this might involve danger to him, but this call was for no frolic—it was to the service of his country! He *was* her all, everything in the world to her, but the one thing which she could not, would not bear would be to see him turn “slacker” and coward when other mothers’ boys—not ten years older than Danny—were already on the firing-line in France!

“Our part in this war is the old fight of ’76, Danny”—she said to him—“*nothing less than that!* The Colonists fought to win independence for America. We are fighting now to save that independence won. And if it takes every man in America—every boy in America—if it takes *you*, Danny—there is just one answer for an American to give.”

And then the two of them hurriedly finished tying up the bundle she had put aside. It was his kit for the expedition!

It was a newer, bigger ideal of patriotism which Danny Harding took with him into his service on Death Head Mountain. His mother, who loved him all too well, had yet

CALLED TO THE COLORS

sent him from her with nothing short positive orders to do his duty like a man.

The Whippoorwill Patrol had answered call to service, and the growing dusk found its members arranging their camp for a bivouac in a lonely stretch of woods where" on the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The Scout Master had not come, but orders had, and the Whippoorwills were engaged in executing them.

"Camp in Mica Cove, conceal yourselves and wait for me," the Scout Master had graphed. "You are called to service."

So here they were in Mica Cove, preparing for whatever service to their try it might be theirs to perform, citedly guessing at what ominous stance had necessitated their sudden out.

Of course, everybody knew that old "Head" must have come into some evil repute, and would have to be taken

hand. And that they would shortly be scouting over all its lonely trails nobody had any doubt whatever.

There were eight of them, for the whole patrol was present. Youngest and happiest of them all was the pink-cheeked, petted tenderfoot, Danny Harding. He was no "slacker," no "coward"! He was here with the others to play a manly part in serving his country, and his mother had sent him from her with a smile!

Besides Danny, there were in the ranks L. C. Whitman, nicknamed "Elsie," Ham and Roger Gayle, Alex Batré, Ed Rowell, and Biddie Burton—as husky and jolly a bunch as could well be got together. All these were older than Danny, and, as all were more or less seasoned to scouting, they were quite disposed to have their fun out of the new recruit.

Danny took their teasing in good spirit, however, for he felt that it was part of his initiation into their envied circle. They were big boys—brown like the woods of which they

CALLED TO THE COLOR

had become a part, panther-foot
eyed, efficient. Danny felt that h
willing to suffer much to become a

The tenderfoot watched them
just how a scout was supposed to
was to Willard McKenzie, the
leader of the patrol, that his eye
oftenest in frank admiration.

McKenzie was the oldest of the
quite seventeen—and five years of
had stamped him a man as Natu
him to be. He knew and could ans
bird-call, could follow a wood-trail
could find himself in any emergen
chart of the stars above him. H
trusted friend of every wild thing
and brother to every wind that
tenderfoot watched the graceful
of the leader's Indianlike figure,
genius for quiet command, an
promptly to be, one day, a secc
McKenzie.

In obedience to McKenzie's
boys built their camp-fire withi

where it would be hidden on three sides by peaks which towered above, and on the fourth by a dense thicket.

Mr. Gordon, the Scout Master, had not come, nor did they know when to expect him. But they knew enough to obey their leader, and this they were proceeding to do.

It was a simple matter—getting the camp ready—and the boys thoroughly enjoyed it. As they were to sleep on the ground, rolled in their blankets, they had merely to clear the space about them of underbrush and fallen timber, and build the fire for cooking.

Of course they talked of war as they worked, for they were scouts in khaki, preparing for action.

Ed Rowell claimed for cousin one of the American engineers who fought their way out of German captivity with their bare fists. Batré's older brother was right then cleaving his winged way through clouds of battle in the service of the La Fayette Escadrille. Whitman knew a man who knew a man who was in the 167th Infantry Regiment

when it made with others t
march, knee-deep in French

Danny said nothing, for
thoughtful lad. But he had
a handsome fellow of only
until America's declaration c
day after Sunday carried the
the aisle of the little Chur
Innocents to "Onward, Chr
Danny had heard his mot
was that song which had
crucifer bearing the Red c
right up to the German guns

But their talk was not al
were brimming over with
laughed and scrapped and
with a zest which made even
enjoyable.

It was when the big fire
and they set about preparin
meal that the best part of
Whoever has not broiled grea
or toasted cold biscuits on
before a cheery camp-fire,

roasted sweet potatoes and green corn in glowing ashes, who has not inhaled the aroma from an old tin coffee-pot, spitting and spluttering on a hot rock, should join the Boy Scouts and hike back to the heart of nature.

Oh, but it was fun! All except the holding in check of savage appetites till the mess should be cooked. Ed Rowell had been detailed to toast the biscuits, and repeatedly threatened to "eat 'em alive" if they didn't brown faster.

Danny, who, with Alex Batré, had been directed to broil the bacon, couldn't for the life of him keep from pinching off a crisp edge now and then to nibble. And yet only yesterday Danny Harding would have turned up his nose at bacon. The stimulating fresh air and the hard work of camp life had begun to get in their good work on him.

On the other side of the fire from Danny, Ham and Roger Gayle were roasting corn and sweet potatoes in the ashes, and a little beyond, Elsie Whitman was filling the water-cans from a trickling mountain spring—while

CALLED TO THE COLORS

Biddie Burton was busily engaging everybody else's feet and whomever he could.

McKenzie, their leader, was absent, having gone down to the cliff on which they were encamped if their fire could be sighted from there through the screening thicket.

The boys had from the first been enjoined by McKenzie to keep their voices low. They were there for serious service, and the necessity for secrecy told them. And the necessity for secrecy the promise of adventure had keyed them up to the highest pitch of excitement.

But when the interest of cooking became uppermost—especially when of the bacon and coffee began to fill thoughts of adventure withdrew a distance and whispered merriment to the order of the hour.

As was natural, they turned on their feet their battery of teasing, and McKenzie bore it as best he could.

"Its mother washes 'em," averred Biddie Burton, coming up behind Danny and carefully examining his ears as he knelt at his work.

"Sure she does," laughed Ham across the fire, "and they say that a sore tooth in its little mouth aches everybody in the family connection."

"Look out there, something's burning!" broke in Ed Rowell suddenly. And the next moment Ham and Roger were busy rescuing from the fire the scorching potatoes.

"I declare," scolded Biddie, lounging up, "I could beat you fellows cooking, with both hands tied behind me."

"Why haven't you ever done it, then?" snapped the elder Gayle, sore over his partial failure.

"Why, nobody has ever tied my hands behind me," came in seemingly hurt explanation from Biddie, and the crowd laughed.

McKenzie had directed them not to wait for him, and they did not. Another five minutes found them eating like young wolves around a languishing fire.

CALLED TO THE COLOR

Later, when the fire winked low, meal was finished—when the stars began to send their blood-chilling screams through the forest—they gathered together and began to talk of haunting things.

“Over yonder, on the real ‘Deer’ spot, began Roger, bringing the interest to the spot, “is the haunted tree with

“Look out,” broke in young little more of that and friend here will cut for home and mother

“I’ll do nothing of the kind, baby!” exclaimed Danny indignantly all the same, his heart was aching in his mouth, for Danny had never been grieved for signal bravery.

“No, you are not ‘a baby,’” quenchable Biddie, “but before of these woods you are going were a baby, and a girl baby at

Danny did not reply to this. very still, wishing that Willie would return from his prolonged

thinking of the mother who was looking to him to play the man.

The scene lost its glow. The surrounding forest grew darker, taller, and began stealing up closer about them.

"If you cry like a baby—!" Danny's mother was whispering to his sinking heart.

The others had fallen into an argument about the exact location of the haunted tree, but presently Ed Rowell asked impatiently:

"Well, what is it about the place, anyway?"

"Haunted!" exclaimed Ham. "A murderer, hunted with dogs through the mountains, hanged himself on——"

"And the old tree died in the night," assisted his brother. "And it stands there now, naked and stark and dead. At night——"

Danny's heart stood still to hear.

"At night," broke in Whitman, "if you creep up close, you can see the dead man swinging in the wind!"

"*Listen!*" exclaimed Biddie under his breath.

It will have to be recorded:
jumped violently at the exclamation:

“What?” demanded L. C.

“And hear old Danny
finished the teasing scamp.

“You bet you, and he’d bet
began Roger.

But Whitman interrupted:

“Danny’s afraid of ghosts
declared, “I tried to leave his
yard once, but he was home
lap before I started running.”

“I’m not any more afraid
you are,” Danny protested ho

“Oh, *aren’t* you?”

“No, I’m not!”

“All right, then,” the big
“I’ve been to the haunted tree
night—these fellows all know
suppose *you* go.”

“Sure, tenderfoot,” put in
“here’s a perfectly good chance
nerve.”

“He hasn’t any,” sneered A

But Danny drew back, aghast at the proposition—go alone to a spot like that, and at night!

“Go to it, kid,” was suddenly spoken quietly in his ear.

Danny turned to see whose was the kindly voice that advised, and looked into Biddie Burton’s eyes.

“Don’t let ’em make you take a dare,” came in another whisper. “Go.” Biddie was not smiling now, and there was a note of serious friendliness in his voice.

It suddenly came to Danny that he would give more to merit that new confidence on Biddie’s part than to break down the taunts of the others. And yet he could not. He could no more command his shaking nerves to carry him to that unhallowed, ghostly spot than he could command the unwilling nerves of another. His will-power had deserted him.

“I *dare* you to go!” badgered L. C.

Danny’s spirit flamed for one brief moment. But in the very next his head dropped, and he turned away.

COLLO
CALLED TO THEM

"This is going too far," the w
fellow heard Biddie Burton excl

"What is 'going too far'?"
asked out of the darkness,
McKenzie advanced into the gro
is 'going too far'?" he repea
from one to another. No answe
unteered, his keen glance quickl
the shamed tenderfoot.

"What have they been up to,
asked.

Danny turned and faced him

"Nothing that makes any c
said.

It was generous in him not to
so Biddie Burton's friendly
him.

The incident passed with the
McKenzie was full of something
seeing it, the boys gathered c
in eager questioning—all excep

All except Danny! His b
career that only an hour ago
so much—had ended, and it

had taken a dare! Nothing would ever matter to him again—Danny told his aching heart—the boys despised him, all except Biddie Burton, and, somehow, Biddie's pity was harder to bear than despite.

"I went to the gap and wired Mr. Gordon," McKenzie was saying now, "and he told me I could put you to it at once. He's had an accident to his car and may not get here for some time."

"What's up?" It was Roger who asked the question.

"Something serious," answered McKenzie, "but Mr. Gordon didn't say what. Have you had supper?"

They replied in concert, eager to receive orders.

"Well," continued McKenzie, "we've got to cover the mountain here, for signs of—anything unusual. You'll have to be careful not to run into trouble yourselves, but you must know your ground. There'll be a good moon if the clouds break."

"Glory be!" Danny heard Elsie Whitman

CALLED TO THE COLORS

breathe in expectant ecstasy, and
have given the world to have felt
that eager joy. But Danny had
dare!

The others were chattering now
as Whitman to be off on the trail
ture.

McKenzie was giving orders:

"Whitman, you can take the north
and bear down over the mountain
will strike out down the creek
there, and work around to you.
There's an old cabin hidden by
and rocks about a quarter below
there, Ham. Know it for what
don't you run your long neck into

In spite of his hurt Danny was
terested. He crept up on the out
the group and listened, wide-eyed
other boys eagerly accepted the
commissions.

"Roger and Ed," their leader was
ing, "bear south till you get below
of the cliff, and then separate and w

territory between you"—with a sweeping gesture. "Alex and Biddie—let me see—you two go over the mountain to the right of Elsie— No, there's the Death Head trail—" He paused a moment in thoughtful survey of them, and the boys looked at each other apprehensively. Not one of them was anxious to work the trail of evil name. Suddenly, however, McKenzie's eyes lighted on Danny Harding, and an inspiration seemed to come to him.

"Say," he exclaimed, "I'll give the new recruit a chance at that. Come here, scout." And he laid a kind hand on Danny's shoulder and drew him into the circle.

Somebody on the outskirts of the group laughed.

"Now you are going to do your first service for your country," McKenzie said to the tenderfoot; "but whatever you do, be wary, because——"

Somebody else laughed, and McKenzie looked about sharply. "What's the joke?" he asked.

“Danny’s afraid,” the man
 “that’s where the dead man

Biddie strolled forward.
 enough to work Elsie’s rig:
 McKenzie. “Give me the D
 You’ll need Dan here about

But Danny raised his head
 true that his face was dead
 head was up.

“I’ll go to the Death He
 McKenzie.

The crowd was dumb-struc
 “But you got white-liver
 down—” L. C. began, after t
 his surprise.

“I wouldn’t go when you
 said the tenderfoot, “but thi
 And he added in his heart: ‘
country.”

“But he *is* afraid,” put in
 at him!”

McKenzie took a long, sti
 Danny’s white face and deter.
 then turned to Roger.

“All the gamer of him,” he said, “to go in spite of being afraid—that’s the stuff that Pershing is looking for. And Mr. Gordon says that a boy who ‘isn’t afraid of anything’ hasn’t sense enough to be trusted with a commission. “Kid,” he continued, turning to Danny, “you find out all that there is to be known about the Death Head vicinity before you show up in camp again.”

“All right,” said Danny.

There was a gasp of surprise among them at the tenderfoot’s final acceptance of the commission, but not one of them—not even Biddie—believed that he would be able to carry it through. And the sensitive, high-strung Danny went out from among them burdened with the feeling that they did not look for him to succeed.

McKenzie walked a little way with him—big-brother fashion, with an arm over his shoulder—and gave him careful directions as to how to proceed. There would be a moon if the clouds broke, his leader warned him, and he was to keep to the shadows.

CALLED TO THE

"I'll be leaving camp myself, "and will not show up for hours. You will probably be the rest of us, so just take a blanket and lie close under it—**you will be perfectly safe** farther up the mountain trail," he paused.

"Never mind about the danger," he admonished finally, "but be peeled for the live one, and good luck!"

"The best of luck!" the men at the front said to him as he was going over the top of the mountain into the dangerous unknown.

At the familiar phrase in his ear, he drew a quick, deep breath, and was going "over the top"—and alone!

Then McKenzie slipped quickly, and Danny started forward up the trail alone. The ghost of a light shone dimly through the black clouds.

and again, and fitfully relieved the enveloping darkness.

Only once did Danny look back. That was when he came to the first turn in the mountain trail which his leader had carefully explained to him. Beyond that turn, and it would be good-by to the last cheering, reassuring gleam of their camp-fire, to the last faint sound of comforting voices.

Danny paused and looked back. Only two remained in the bright circle toward which his rapidly chilling spirit was reaching back. He recognized at once the tall, slim form of McKenzie, but— Yes, that chunky one was Biddie Burton. The two of them were standing close together, talking earnestly. And now Danny caught, by a sudden leap of the firelight, the fact that they were looking toward him. Biddie was nodding.

It was so bright, so safe back there where they had laughed and feasted and wrangled together. Then suddenly Danny thought of the young crucifer in the little Church of the Holy Innocents.

CALLED TO THE COLORS

"Onward, Christian Soldiers!"

The next moment Danny was going in his trembling way, but that onward. The heart in his breast gave alarm to every nerve in his body, his face toward the dim, dark trail rose in his throat and threatened him. He gulped it down, and cre-

McKenzie had told him that a keep his head. That was the h. A fellow could force himself to go a haunted spot at night, but to plan, to watch as he went——!

But he was a scout, and a scout prepared." Danny forced himself as he went.

He was not following some trail in response to Whitman's he was scouting old Death Head vice of his country.

Danny found that he could follow McKenzie's directions better than he. Now that his eyes were thorned to the dark, he could describe landmarks for which his leader had

him. After the turn in the mountain trail, an abrupt and jagged cliff ahead beckoned the way. The shadow of the cliff won, Danny waited for another appearance of the pale, cold moon by the help of whose light he hoped to locate the three giant pines—his next objective. From the pines, McKenzie had told him, old Death Head could be sighted plainly enough, for from that point it was silhouetted, black and unmistakable, against the sky, and its summit was marked by the stark, white, blasted tree of evil fame.

“That’s where the dead man swings!” echoed in Danny’s memory. And for a moment it seemed that he *must* give up and fly back to safety. But something said: “I’ll disown you, sir!” And Danny again turned his face in the direction of his duty.

The moon looked out of the drifting clouds. Danny located the three giant pines in the distance, and for one blessed moment saw a reasonably clear path, skirting along the mountainside.

Darkness again! But Danny took the skirting path to the pine giants.

Once he nearly lost his nerve altogether, for suddenly there was behind him a sound as if some human foot had stumbled. The tenderfoot dropped warily to the long grass at one side of the path, and listened. A long, long time he listened, but not another sound did he hear. At length he told himself that the step was that of some wild creature which he had disturbed.

Then forward again! Creeping, panther-footed.

Danny reached the pines at last—and sure enough, old Death Head rose all too plainly before him. He saw, or thought he saw, a tall white something on its summit.

In thinking it over afterward, Danny was never quite sure just what happened between the pines and the haunted tree. He had a vague recollection of imagining that step behind again, and he recalled at one point the almost welcome pain of a stubbed toe. But for the rest, he was too frightened to take it all in.

By the time the tenderfoot reached the summit of old Death Head and stood within fifty feet of the haunted tree, he was too frightened to move, and he almost *expected* to see the thing which he most feared. The sky was overcast again, but a dim white something towered before him—the haunted tree—and—and——!

But just at that moment the clouds broke, and the full moon, now all unveiled, flooded the scene with light.

Naked, stark, ghostly, the blasted pine-tree rose before him. With a sudden spasm at his heart Danny looked for the swinging dead man. But if anything unearthly hung from those bare white branches, his mortal eyes were spared the vision. And presently his awakening reason began to urge: "There are no such things as 'ghosts.'"

The next moment the young scout came fully to himself, and withdrew quickly from the all-revealing flood of moonlight to the friendly shadow of a low shrub. He began to peer sharply about. The growth around

CALLED TO THE COLO

was ragged, with great spaces |
there was anything here that a
to note, the opportunity was idea

He must perform the duty fo.
was here! His leader had tol
know the spot before he showed t
again.

Danny began skirting about in the
getting every angle he could on
and exploring adjacent wood lar
true that he kept well away from th
tree, but he came back to its vicin
now and then. And each time as
he managed to force himself to ap
closer.

Nearer and nearer he got to it, a
suddenly, he heard issue from somev
its branches a low, sighing moan.
thought he would drop in his tracks, b
did not. Instead, he stood as still as
and listened.

That moan again! Every time a gu
wind came, the dim, weird sound trem
along the night.

The moon was shining brilliantly now. Danny stood staring at the haunted tree.

All at once he crept forward, sharply intent on something.

What was that straight black line against the sky? Where did it come from?—that . haunted tree?

Another moment and Danny was at the foot of the ghostly pine-tree, staring upward at the crisscross of its naked branches.

There was no swinging dead man there, but there was *something*—at the top!

Danny dropped to the ground and retreated a little on all fours for a better view-point. 'Way up, two parallel black bars rose against the sky.

A scout must keep his head!

Now, no boughs of a tree ever grew that straight! And what were those orderly black lines which extended from one bar to the other?

That moan again!—or—or was it the sound of a wire, played upon by the wind?

Danny shifted his position again.

CALLED TO THE COI

Yes, that black line across
nected directly with the queer
the tree top.

"Wireless!" said the scout's

Danny stood up. All child
swinging ghost had dropped aw
He had not the slightest inclin
cry like a baby about anything.

He was a scout on duty!

Another moment and he
velvet-footed, through the wo
that black line as it led away from
tree. At the other end of it
ceiving-station!

And it was no easy task whic
him. Over sharp rocks and th
briers that black line led him or
the moon would desert him and
the clue for a while. Someti
be forced to abandon his clue t
an insuperable barrier. But he
back to it, always pressed on.
On and on! And then, sud
disappeared. It ended, or seem

large pile of boulders which clung to the mountainside. The undergrowth was dense here.

Danny circled about the spot. Yes, the wire stopped here. He began creeping through the underbrush—feeling his way along the side of a great boulder.

Suddenly his hand touched—*nothing!*

The scout stopped and thought. There was some sort of break in the rock here.

Danny had a flashlight in his pocket which he had been too cautious to use. He thought of it now, and hesitated. Then he slipped it out and pressed the spring.

Before him was what seemed the door of a cave. He looked closer. Yes, the wire led into the cave. Darkness, again, for he was afraid to use his light any longer.

Danny dropped to his all-fours and crept into the black hole. A floor of soft sand helped him to advance noiselessly. After a few yards the scout reached a turn in the rocky passageway, and——

His eye caught a big, black-hooded shadow humped over a point of light!

Danny withdrew quickly behind the sheltering turn in the wall, and crouched in the sand, dead-still. But his blood was up. He took a second look.

A man was sitting over some sort of instrument, and over his ears were cups, something like Danny had seen worn by the girl at the telephone central station. The one point of light in the big dark recess was turned on a note-book under the man's hand.

The young scout drew back, and crept silently out of the cavern.

Out under the stars again, and this time with his blood on fire! A spy, a German spy sat in that cave and sent messages——!

Only yesterday a fleet of transports had slipped out of the harbor, with thousands of American soldiers on board—submarines—sea-raiders!

But a scout must keep his head.

Help? Which way could help be found? The boys were scattered, McKenzie would not be in camp. Nobody knew when to expect Mr. Gordon.

Which way? Which way? Oh, yes, down over the drop of the cliff to the south yonder was the mountain wagon road by which their scouting party had ascended that afternoon. If he could get to the road he could find somebody somewhere—surely, there were a few inhabitants hereabouts!

That German was sending wireless messages right this minute— Yes, the shortest way to the road was the only way for a fellow to take now! And Danny took it.

When he reached the cliff, spent and sore, a new difficulty presented itself. A sheer fifty-foot drop still separated him from the road. He crept along the edge searching for a footing by which to descend, and presently found one that looked possible. There were broken, shelving places here, and tufts of growing things down the face of the dizzy wall.

Danny began to climb down. But he found it harder than he had thought, and at times he was a mere human fly clinging to a rock wall.



Aman was sitting over some sort

CALLED TO THE COLOR

Nearly down—only about fifteen
But at that moment the human
crumbled under his clinging fingers
dropped. It ought not to have
fallen, but the trouble was a loose
board, and came down on one
owner lay prostrate on the ground.

Danny lay very still for a few
minutes, looking at the stars and thinking of

Then presently the sound of his
feet came to him from somewhere out
in the forest. With an effort he raised up a little
and took off the stone from his arm, but
it fell back again.

The stars began to swim at the
edges, and the voices to grow fantastic.

But a scout—must—keep—his

Those voices sounded familiar
and summoned all his strength, and
the answering call of a wounded whippoorwill
the night.

Silence, and then a whippoorwill
called sharply from out the forest.

Danny called again.

Shortly after that came low voices and the sound of hurrying feet. Then Mr. Gordon, the Scout Master, McKenzie, their leader, and jolly old Biddie Burton were hovering over him.

“Are you hurt?” they asked in one breath.

But Danny cried out feverishly: “There’s a German spy sending wireless messages from old Death Head, and our transports have put to sea!” And he told them, brokenly, the story of his find.

There was consternation among them for one brief moment, and then everybody woke to action.

They must get the man at once—but *which way* to go?

Mr. Gordon spoke quickly:

“You stay with Danny, Burton; McKenzie and I will go back to the Death Head and follow the clue from there.” And even as he spoke he and McKenzie were hurriedly, but tenderly, binding up the wounded arm, while Biddie improvised a comforting sling for it.

But Danny knew that the route by way of

CALLED TO THE COLORS

old Death Head was long and c
And he knew also that the shortest
the only way to take when one's
one's country calls.

He got to his feet.

"I'll show you the shortest way,"

How they found means of scaling
how they accomplished their steal
ney back to the hidden wireless
piloted by the wounded tender
they supported at every step, is
story to tell.

But they reached the mouth of
cave. The two boys were left out
very shortly thereafter Mr. Gor
McKenzie brought out between th
shadowy figure with its hands bound

That night, the east-bound pass
flagged at the little station in th
and there boarded it a squad of l
with their leaders, who guarded bet
a captured German spy.

“Gordon, how did you manage it?” called a voice, from some distance down the long coach as they entered.

For answer, Mr. Gordon took hold of a little boy who wore his left arm in a sling and, pushing him gently forward, said before that whole car full of curious, excited people:

“We had an American on guard to-night.”

The Probate Judge’s office in the old courthouse on the square was, the next morning, the scene of a most unusual gathering.

Danny and his mother had been asked by the Scout Master to meet him there at ten o’clock. Mr. Gordon had sent his request in the form of a brief note which explained that the Boy Scout Court of Honor was to be in session that morning, and said that he wished his youngest scout to be present.

Danny’s mother was strangely elated over the request, but Danny did not know why. He was so young in the business of scouting that some details of the system had not yet become definitely his.

He ventured one surmise when the note was read—something in connection with the taking of that German spy, of course. Maybe the Whippoorwills were to be commended for delivering the goods. And Danny's mind's eye recalled again the stirring scene—McKenzie and Mr. Gordon marshaling to the station between them the big German whom they had captured and bound, and he and the other scouts trudging along in excited escort. It was a wonderful thing to be a man, Danny thought wistfully—to be big and strong enough to lay a compelling hand on the enemy in our midst and say:

“I want you!”

But it will have to be recorded that Danny's mother acted a little queerly on receipt of the note. When Danny said that perhaps the Whippoorwills were to be commended for “delivering the goods,” his mother looked up at him quickly, as if in surprise. Then she laughed a little and cried a little, and then she dashed off for her hat and wraps like a girl.

At ten o'clock sharp, Danny and his mother presented themselves at Judge Sledge's door. As they paused to knock, a voice came to them through the closed door—a familiar voice, and it sounded very earnest. Then the door was opened in response to their knock.

They hesitated a moment while they took in the quiet, dignified scene within. Portly old Judge Sledge was sitting well forward in his office chair with his spectacles pushed back upon his bald head, while Doctor Cranfield and several gentlemen whom Danny knew only by sight were grouped about him. All were in the attitude of listening intently to a man who stood before them—Mr. Gordon.

Danny's quick glance took in all this, including the background of khaki-clad Whip-poorwills, plastered against the wall beyond.

The gentlemen rose, on the entrance of Mrs. Harding, and the scouts crowded forward to whisper excitedly to Danny.

But Danny did not have time to listen to them, for Doctor Cranfield—taking him by

CALLED

his good arm—tu
to the company :

“This is the boy

There was an a
in which he reali
room was looking
be introduced.

for each man to v
in greeting looke
foot, and made
kindly, remarks a

“ He was a sma

“ He ought to

“ He was his n

Danny looked
mother's eyes ar
sion which he wa
was smiling—in
her beautiful eye

When they res
turned upon the
monial quiet and
trance of the new
dispelled.

Mr. Gordon took a chair behind Mrs. Harding and explained to her and Danny in a low tone that the session was nearly over. Judge Sledge had been compelled to convene the court earlier than the appointed hour.

The other men were talking apart. Presently, one of them turned to the Scout Master and said:

“Following what you have just related, Mr. Gordon—do you think that it was quite wise in your patrol leader to send out a mere tenderfoot on a really dangerous commission?”

Mr. Gordon was about to reply, when McKenzie stepped forward and saluted. “May I answer that?” he asked.

The court assented, and all turned to hear.

“Our private advices had been,” began McKenzie, with his Indianlike figure drawn up to its full height, “that it was Camelback Mountain which was under suspicion. We located our camp on a parallel range, and miles from the suspected vicinity. Mr. Gordon and I and several of the older boys were

later to take in hand the serious work of Camelback, but we thought it well to give the others a little experience. I had not intended to employ the tenderfoot till I overheard the boys teasing him. I sent him to the Death Head to redeem himself in his own eyes and in theirs."

"Please, may I speak?" Biddie Burton had come forward eagerly.

With the permission of the judge, Biddie hurried on:

"Without letting the other boys know, McKenzie told me to follow Danny in case his courage should give out completely. But he gave me my orders to keep well in the rear. He wanted Dan to go to the haunted tree by himself, if he would—to win his spurs, you see."

"Did you follow Harding all the way?" someone interrupted.

"All the way to the haunted tree? Yes, sir, and he *did go!* He went right up to it and circled all about it. Then the earth seemed to open and swallow him up. I looked

and looked for him. Then I ran back for help. I found McKenzie and Mr. Gordon, and we all three started out after Dan. You have heard the rest."

This seemed satisfactory, and the judge turned to Danny.

"Come here, Daniel," he said, "and tell the court now how you captured your wireless operator."

Danny started.

"I didn't do it, sir," he said in embarrassment. "Mr. Gordon and Willard McKenzie captured the man. I only showed them where he was."

The men exchanged glances.

"Well," said the judge, again, "come here and tell us what you *did do*."

Danny came forward.

"Salute!" he heard Biddie whisper.

Danny saluted.

"Now," said the judge, "tell these gentlemen here what—what you told *your mother* when you got back from the mountains last night."

THE
CALLED TO THE COLO

Danny looked at his mother
were misty again, but she was
him to do as the judge directed.

The tenderfoot stood embarrass
them and told the story exactly a
related it to his mother. He didn'
do this, for he was very much ash
having to tell how frightened he h
and how he had had to force him
forward.

The men listened intently.
while one would interrupt to ask

When Danny got to the point
of his acceptance of McKenzie'
to cover old Death Head, a dan
man on the judge's right lean

"One moment, Harding," h
Kenzie told us before you ent
were afraid to go when the bo
but that when he told you to g
ing trip, you said, "this is dif
did you mean by its being 'dif

Danny looked up from his n
ing of the judge's paper-weight.

"I meant that it was for my country," he answered simply.

The dark-eyed man glanced at the others.

"*Beat that,*" he said in a low tone to them.

Judge Sledge took down his spectacles from his bald head, adjusted them on his nose, and looked hard at the boy.

"Proceed," he commanded, after a moment.

Danny proceeded.

"Weren't you afraid to crawl into that cave?" one of them asked in the course of the story.

"Yes, sir," said Danny.

Later, another interrupted with:

"But if your arm was broken and paining you, why didn't you stay with Burton, there, and let the others go by the way of Death Head, and take up the clue you had followed?"

"Why, you see," answered Danny, "we had to get to the man quickly to stop his telegraphing. I knew a short route to him."

“Exactly,” said the judge
he turned to the men about

“All right, gentlemen?” h

There was a whispered
few moments, and then, t
prise, they all turned to him.

“Daniel,” said the judge,
why this Court of Honor h
into session?”

“Danny’s glance swept
figures against the wall—he
Gordon.

“I hope,” he answered to th
you like what we did.”

“Yes,” said the judge, smil
“yes, the Whippoorwills are
good graces, and we commend
ness and efficiency of Mr. Gor
leader, McKenzie. However, t
been called together to sit in
your part in last night’s perform
do you realize that you have
and well?”

Danny stood for one momen

the dawning realization of what this meant. Then he looked across at his mother. Life holds for a boy no higher, happier moment than that in which he realizes he has made his mother proud of him.

Without waiting for him to reply, the judge was continuing:

“This court finds, Danny, that in spite of very human, very natural fears, and at the cost of suffering to yourself, you performed a service to your country which may be more far-reaching than any of us dream. And if there is anything braver than the conquering of fear, anything more manly than the voluntary endurance of pain for a high cause, or any earthly motive of action higher than one’s duty to one’s country, we have never found it.

“Now, Son, it is not within the power of this, our local court, to confer upon you what we think you deserve. It is ours, however, to recommend to the Boy Scout National Court of Honor that you be awarded the Honor Medal. This we are going to do be-

CALLED TO :

cause we believe you l
life by your prompt a
that you did it at the
yourself and at the risk

When, a few weeks la
did arrive and was p
breast, the young scou
to take his little mother

“If you cry like a b
laughingly but with h
“I’ll *disown* you!””



UNDER THE

"LOUISE!"

The little girl came suddenly and nearly dropped. Somebody had called her name—

She looked hurriedly about, but nobody in sight—nobody but a sawperched upon a park bench, and a ting along the open between the hawthorns.

Which one had called?

"Louise!"

The little girl started back, to scream—it was the hawthorn

But the next moment a boy appeared between parted boughs

"Come here!" exclaimed its pressed excitement. "We've to tell you!"

Down went the book-satchel

fear this time. Billy Hastings had called—called excitedly—and Billy was known to furnish nearly all the third-grade thrills there were. So the next moment Louise was stooping her way under the hawthorn boughs in answer to her playfellow's summons.

Billy was not alone in the green grotto in which Louise presently found herself, for nearly half the third-grade members were there. There was wide-eyed Tinsie Willis, with her little frilly skirts bristling with excitement, with Mamie Moore swallowing to keep back hysterical tears, and Sadie and Lallie Raiford, with their backs to each other for safe-keeping. And there were boys, a whole mob of boys!

The children were huddled together in suppressed excitement, and were whispering all at the same time. It was plain that something terrible, something menacing, had happened.

“You know that new boy that came to school this morning—?” began one.

“That ‘Rudolph Kreisler’?” put in another.

“Sh-h-h!” interrupted a third wildly.

But Billy Hastings thrust his red, round face close to Louise’s and announced in blood-curdling whisper:

“*Rudolph Kreisler is a German spy!*”

Louise’s legs crumpled under her, and she sat down in a heap.

Again they were all talking at the same time, and this time at her.

“He’s got his trousers’ pockets just *full* of something!” exclaimed Pete Laslie.

“And he’s watching, *watching!*” put in another. “Didn’t you see him sitting off there by himself looking at us while we played ball?”

“Spying!” hissed Luke Musgrove over Billy Hastings’s shoulder.

The children started and looked about apprehensively. Luke’s words always carried weight by reason of the fact that he had been two years in the third grade and ought to know what he was talking about if he didn’t

“Yes,” chimed in Billy, coming close to Louise again and speaking in his most dra

matic tone. "Just you dare to draw a deep breath, and he'll tell the Kaiser on you!"

Louise gasped—a short, a curtailed little gasp. Never till the Great War should be over would she breathe from her diaphragm again!

"Oh-o-o-o, *Louise!*" from round-eyed Tinsie Willis.

"*What?*"

"You've left your book-satchel out there in the path! Just suppose he were to come by and see it!"

There was a moment of consternation, of wild chattering, in which everybody poked his head out to see, but nobody would venture far enough to get the incriminating satchel.

Then Tommie Warren had an inspiration. Snatching a crooked-handle umbrella from Ella Vaiden, he flung himself flat on the grass and reached for the tell-tale satchel with the crook.

"It's a good thing Ella brought that umbrella!" exclaimed Tinsie. And all looked at Ella, who stood up very straight in spite of

UNDER THE FLAG

the low-dipping boughs. The Louise had her beloved book-s close to her pounding heart.

“Sh-h-h!” suddenly came from a stituted sentinel.

“What?”

“*He’s coming!*”

The crowd in the bushes stood breathless as the German spy crossed the hawthorn path.

He was a small lad—small grade—with big blue eyes and tawny hair. The Kaiser had known him very well, for there was a poverty about his mended clothes after all, maybe those carefully hidden at his knees were only a part of his disguise. His pockets were bulging with knotty-looking somethings very poorly concealed bombs. He was a young fellow, as a perfectly good American had been, but walked slowly and with a suspicious look down.

He passed.

“Let’s get him now!” suggested Luke.

“Good!” exclaimed Billy. “Get some rocks!” And instantly all was excitement, the uncensored noise of which reached the little German and caused him to take to his heels.

In the confusion of the next few moments Louise scarcely realized what they were about. But when they tore out of the bushes, snatching up rocks as they went, and rushed after their flying prey, her heart stood still. He was such a *little* boy!

With the back of her hand pressed tight against the sobs that would not be stifled, and with tears raining down her cheeks, the little girl followed in the wake of the howling mob.

Then somebody rounded a hawthorn bush and came bang up against her. It was Jimmie Fisher, a big, red-headed rock of strength, who could carry lightly the heaviest book-satchels there were.

“What are you crying about?” he asked, after his first quick survey of her.

“They—they are killing Rudolph Kreisler!” sobbed Louise.

"No," assured Jimmie, "he'll get home free. He lives just across there. Are these your books?"

The next day matters only grew worse.

The whole atmosphere of the third grade had become electric with suspicion of a certain little boy who, looking neither to right nor to left, kept his wistful blue eyes bent on the task before him. When Rudolph stood up at the singing of the Star-Spangled Banner, Luke growled out that he was "just pretending." And when, from his seat near the door, the German lad answered the knock of a visitor, Ella Vaiden whispered audibly:

"See *that*? He wants to see *who's there!*"

In recitation Rudolph answered the questions put to him with despicable German efficiency, but Luke missed with conspicuous patriotism and went noisily foot.

But through it all Louise was doing her own thinking. She was a loyal little citizen and loved her country with all her heart; but there flowed through her veins the blood of

a long line of Americans who had been just and fair. The little girl was afraid of German spies—afraid for her country—and Rudolph Kreisler's pockets did bulge ominously. If Rudolph Kreisler *was* a German spy, why he would have to be dealt with, of course.

But if he wasn't——?

Louise wished with all her heart that Miss Barclay, the teacher, would suspect this terrible smothered tragedy that was being enacted within her class. Of course one's teacher, like one's mother, could solve every problem; and Miss Barclay in particular could command the storms of childhood to be still. If only Miss Barclay knew!

But in third-grade ethics it was "dishonorable" to "tattle," so Louise was compelled to hold her peace and think fast. There were recesses ahead in which covertly cruel things might happen, and an after-school walk through a lonely park from which a real *little* boy might not get home free. Something must be done.

At first recess the boys and girls were, as

usual, separated in their play, but Louise—observing from afar—saw that the little German sat by himself on the steps, and watched the spirited ball-play of the others with keen alertness. Yes, it was very suspicious.

Big recess brought with it an unusual privilege that day. The third-grade boys and girls were to be allowed to mingle together and on the front lawn, in order to keep them from under the feet of certain workmen who were making excavations through the school-grounds.

This was all very thrilling, for it was from a tall staff on the front lawn that their beautiful new flag was floating, and to-day they would be able to see it close—to touch the pole with their very hands! Then, too, it would be so remarkable to play with *boys*.

Louise pondered it all as the third-grade girls filed down to their lunch-room. Rudolph Kreisler was not there, of course, but Rudolph would be with them among the other boys at play-time. She would then be able to watch

him narrowly—to keep an eye on those bulging pockets.

All the other girls were chattering over their lunch, but Louise drank her milk and ate her sandwich in thoughtful silence.

Presently a hand was laid upon her heavy curls and she looked up with a start. The principal was smiling down at her.

“What are you thinking of, little tragedy queen?” he asked.

Louise blushed and tried vainly to reply.

The teacher serving the sandwiches answered the principal.

“Of ‘the impossibility of all things,’” she said with a curious sidewise smile.

The principal put his hand under Louise’s chin and, tilting her head back, looked deep into her eyes.

“You must run and play a great deal,” he said, and passed on.

Then, when the last sandwich had gone the way of all good sandwiches, they repaired to the front lawn.

It was all so wonderful—so green and cool

and stately-looking. And there was the great new flag, curling in the fitful wind—'way sky!

The boys were already on when the little girls were made steps and disbanded among the most unusual privilege of games. Then, all suddenly a shyness came down upon the girls to play with boys at recess? At *school* it came natural enough to them, but this was not "after school" was most embarrassing.

Louise found herself timid in the recess-presence of Jimmie Luke, and began to back a few steps.

"Look out!" shouted Billy

Louise jumped to "look out" on the bottom step, sat there. She had nearly backed into the

In the face of danger, she dropped away. The next

had fled back to her countrymen and was listening, excited, to their eager whispers.

“Rudolph Kreisler sits by himself—always by himself. Isn’t that funny?”

“Just look at him *now*!”

“See him watching the flag?”

“Get that gleam in his eye? Look, quick!”

“Old rascal! He got home free yesterday—but just you wait!”

And so they stood apart from him and whispered.

The German spy dug his toes in the sand a little longer, then rose and moved a few steps farther up.

Then Ella Vaiden declared that they were wasting time, and proposed that they begin a game.

But nobody knew what to play.

“I’ll tell you!” exclaimed Louise. “Let’s play ‘Under the Flag.’”

“What’s that?” asked several.

“Why—why—” began Louise, inventing the game as she proceeded, “it’s this way: you go stand under the flag and look up at

UNDER THE FLAG

it till the wind blows it out straight and then you make a wish. If it is wide till you have finished, your wishes will come true."

All were interested at once, and the game began. The fitful, boisterous wind took an active part and the play became so

Tinsie Willis was the first to catch the flag," but she was so excited to wish till the broadly floating banner wrapped itself about its staff and her opportunity was gone.

Then everybody began talking and Mamie Moore piped up: "I'm going to wish for a pair of shiny-bug slippers!

Louise was shocked, and quickly explained that when one wished under the flag it was to be for something serious and from the depths of one's heart.

"Sure," supported Jimmie of the red team. "You can wish for shiny-bug slippers and an umbrella!"

But Mamie couldn't then think of anything more serious than the need of gil-

pers, and was promptly ruled out till her imagination should come to her assistance.

Several boys took turns next, but they were so noisy and boisterous that they came near spoiling everything.

Then Flora Archer took her place. Flora was a thoughtful little girl who carried around in her eyes a deep, deep something people never understood. With her lips close to the flagpole, she whispered her message to it, and all the while the beautiful banner streamed out to its farthest length.

Flora came back without speaking, and the children looked at her in curious silence. But when the others were noisily choosing times again, Flora slipped her hand into Louise's and whispered:

"I wished for our soldiers to win in the war, but for them not to be cruel when they do."

"Yours, Louise!" exclaimed somebody.

And before Louise had time to examine the depths of her heart to see what it was she most desired, a half-dozen pair of friendly hands pushed her forward. It was no time

UNDER THE FLAG

to hold back—to spoil the mounted the green knoll from the great flagpole rose.

But she did not at once glance had accidentally lighted figure on the steps, and was for a moment in startled content.

He was such a *little* boy, and —apart! But one must make where one's country was involved blue eyes "gleaming" with ven Or were they, only full—of shir

"Look up! Look up!" the

Louise threw back her head—so far that the familiar scene came lost to her view and she ing but the vision above. Amid tree tops and against a threaten flag of freedom streamed out in pling glory—red for the courage hearts, white for the purity of p should harbor, and blue for truth higher, farther heaven above the clouds. Now rippling, now curli

ing, snapping, and now—straight out, fronting the coming storm!

“Quick! Quick!” the children shouted, as Old Glory floated free.

Suddenly the child stretched up her hands. It was not a wish, but a prayer, that her young heart sent up to her country’s flag.

“Help me to—play fair!” she whispered.

Louise saw her comrades only mistily when she came down the green knoll again toward them.

Then all became babel again.

“It’s my time next!” exclaimed Luke Musgrove, shouldering forward.

“Who said so?” demanded another.

“I said so,” answered the big boy rudely, and he strode to his place against the flag-pole. “I wish,” he began in a loud, strident voice, and without waiting for the wind to come hurtling across the green, “I wish to *wring the neck of that German spy!*”

All eyes were quickly turned from the flag to where a little wide-eyed boy shrank back in terror against the steps.

“Glory be!” shouted
 “Teacher’s gone in—let’s dr
 the flag!”

Instantly the flame of p
 them, and they started after

But at the foot of the
 blocked the way. Louise
 herself between.

“It’s not fair, and you s/

The astonished mob wave

“Not *fair*?”” echoed Lu

“No,” stormed Louise.

him to come under the flag
make him do it!”

“We’ll see about that—”

“*That we will!*” put in J

it was not to Louise that h
 talking to Luke, and he pla
 tectingly in front of Loui
 German, and faced the t
 Never before in her life ha
 how beautiful was a shock of

The third-grade bully w
 but in a decidedly lower key

“Now, then”—Jimmie was speaking to Louise this time—“you are bossing this game. Say what you want done with that—that—” and he looked at the frightened Rudolph.

Louise glanced up at the flag. It was floating now—broad and free enough to cover all who might come.

“I am going to *invite* Rudolph to come under our flag,” she said.

The children gasped as Louise held out her hand to the little alien.

“Won’t you come and be American with us?” she asked kindly.

The boy drew back a moment while his blue eyes searched her face for whatever hidden cruelty might lurk beneath its seeming sweetness. Then he smiled—a timid, but trusting smile—and rising, took her extended hand.

But Billy Hastings called jeeringly: “He’s a sneak! He’s just doing it to pretend!”

“He knows I’d drag him if he didn’t come!” exclaimed another.

“Coward! *Coward!*” yelled Luke. “You’re afraid to refuse!”

UNDER THE FLAG

And then, all suddenly, something German lad flamed up. He snatched his hand from Louise's. He stood tall and straight, his eyes at a height with blazing eyes, and cried:

"It's a lie!"

The sound of the school-bell startled quiet which followed the admitted revolt.

"Please," pleaded Louise, "don't do them! You've time yet to come to the flag."

But Rudolph stood indignant, impatient, and said to the children, "Get to your lines."

The principal's call-bell was heard tapping on the porch.

A group of boys came suddenly together into a tight bunch.

"We'll fix him after school," Louise threatened. And she knew that Rudolph heard it, too—knew by the sudden white which swept over his face.

The next minute the boys and girls were drawn up in parallel lines ready to march into the schoolhouse. Louise was at the end of

line and Rudolph Kreisler was the last on the boys' row. They were opposite each other.

"Eyes front—march!" came the command, and the lines moved forward with one impulse.

"Eyes front!" But to save her life Louise could not help stealing a sidelong glance at Rudolph.

To her horror she saw the little alien slip quietly behind a rose-bush and drop out of sight into the bricked-up area which furnished window-space for the basement.

With a flash Louise remembered that those windows communicated directly with the engine-room, and that the engine-room was directly under the third grade.

"Pay attention, Louise," came from the porch, and Louise's startled, dark eyes were turned to the front again.

When the children were seated in their room it developed that Miss Barclay had been temporarily called away, and that a scared-looking girl from the teacher training-class was in charge of the third grade.

UNDER THE FLAG

The new teacher did not but the children did, and there excitement in consequence.

Louise, who had not breath what she knew, sat grasping both hands. Rudolph Kreisler to come under the flag! Of course he taunted him, but the stark fact that he *had* refused. And Louise being had ever seen inside the engine-rooms. Rudolph Kreisler, bulging all, was in the engine-room, feet!

And then a new fear sudden upon her heart. Suppose she should do something to the window, but found it impossible to shift her position so that she could see out of the window, but found it impossible

"Oh-o-o, teacher!" Louise sound of excitement in the voice, but quieted somewhat when she heard that it was Tinsie Willis who had left her hat on the front of the engine-room.

"Louise, go and get your

substitute, looking all about the room to see which one of the many little girls might be the one reported.

Louise rose from her seat with fear and trembling and left the room.

But the first glimpse of the out-of-doors dispelled her great new fear—her flag was still there!

The stately lawn looked vast and awe-inspiring now that one had to face its darkly waving greens all alone, but Duty called. She had left her hat by the flagpole, and she now went timidly up to get it. She mounted the green knoll. She looked up.

To play fair—to play fair! And yet, one must be loyal. One couldn't let German spies go around with their pockets—Rudolph Kreisler was in the engine-room right now!

Louise's grandfather and his father's father had died for their country—would they know, 'way up yonder in heaven, if she of their own blood were to turn coward at the test?

It was too poignant a risk. Louise took

UNDER THE FLAG

her young life in her hands. *Down* the knoll and around the rose-bush, and dropped into the brick area right *by* the door which opened from the engine-room was raised.

The little girl peeped in, with her swelling till she thought she would smother. There was black dust on the floor and soot on the walls. And there in the corner rose the huge black demon engine. The crouching enemy was to be seen anywhere he was hiding, of course!

She slipped through the window, peered at the great silent engine, and came face to face with Rudolph Kreisler.

The die was cast now.

"Tell me," demanded Louise, choked with excitement and fear, "are you a—*a spy?*"

"No," said the astonished boy, "no."

"Well, what are you, then?" "I am not backing down now; she was going to hit it out with him."

"I wanted to be—American," he said.

lips threatening to quiver. "I—I thought I was." And he looked away.

One must know the truth when one's country was at stake. Louise drew a quick breath.

"Well, what are you doing with your pockets full of bombs, then?" she forced herself to bring out.

The little boy turned toward her again, and began slowly to draw out the contents of those suspicious pockets. A mitt, a top, two balls, a kite-string, a chicken-foot, a gopher, nails of various lengths, some tobacco tags, and a grimy stick of candy were laid one by one on the janitor's tool-bench, and the German spy stood with his pockets turned wrong side out.

But one must have the *whole* truth.

"What are you doing with balls and mitts when you sit on the steps all the time?" the little girl demanded, but with decidedly less asperity this time.

"I thought maybe they'd—let me play, sometime." Something rolled down his cheek and splashed on the front of his jacket.

UNDER THE FLAG

"Won't they let you play?"
blinking hard to clear her sudden
vision.

The boy shook his head.
"Well, why doesn't
and scold the teacher
manded in indignant sym-

"I haven't any mam-

"Oh-o-o! Well, you
you? Why doesn't he

"Father says those
don't know how awful it

—" then he stopped.
"Doesn't your father

the little girl asked.

"Why, no," said the

"Does he love America?"

"Yes," said the boy.

"Well! Well!" exclaimed

Then—"Do you know, Rudolph

for your papa!"

But Rudolph did not answer.
He merely turned aside till his
den.

Suddenly a remembered something gripped Louise.

"Rudolph," she said, "if you *are* American, why did you refuse to come under the flag?"

"I—I was going to—but they called me a 'coward,' and said I was afraid to refuse," he answered huskily.

Louise found herself batting very heavy lashes again.

"I am so glad I came to you," she said, "because I never would have known that you are not a German spy if you hadn't told me!"

"Lou-i-i-se!"

The two started at the call—it was in Tinsie Willis's high-pitched voice. Evidently she had been sent to find the truant.

"Sh-h-h!" exclaimed Louise to Rudolph. "They are after me for staying out so long. I must go."

"Those steps yonder lead to the front hall," said the boy. "Go up that way."

"But you must come, too!" Louise exclaimed.

"I can't," replied the miserable child.

UNDER THE FLA

"The boys are fixing to fig school is over I'll slip out and

"But why wait? Why now?" asked the little girl, a ness coming over her.

"The police will get me if I street during school hours," ar

"Lou-i-i-se!"

"I'm going," whispered Loui "but *don't* let the boys cat Barclay has gone—and—and— catch you, Rudolph!"

The next moment she glide stairway and came out into the

Jimmie Fisher was emerging: grade cloaking-room with his h

"Father's leaving for Franc pital unit," he explained h mother sent for me to tell l Then he darted away.

Miss Barclay gone! And Had God himself deserted th

When Louise crept back ir

room—ahead of Tinsie Willis, who was still searching for her—she found things very troublous indeed. The children were naughty and restless, and the substitute was—a substitute! The whole class had been told to stay in, and Louise was promptly included in the sentence as soon as her tardy little face appeared in the doorway.

But she did not cry or fling herself about, for she knew she had remained out of the room overtime. Of course it had been for a high purpose, but that she could not explain, so she merely assented courteously and slipped into her seat. Her grandfather and his father's father had laid down their lives for the right—if she did not succeed in living through that dreadful half-hour of punishment, she would be but another of her race to die for a high cause.

Matters grew worse, and now the wind and the sky took a hand. The great trees outside began to battle fiercely together, and the sky frowned, darker and darker.

Suddenly Louise—looking out of the win-

UNDER THE FLAG

dow—saw Perkins, the janitor, ~~had~~
the flag! Was the Houston ~~Street~~
surrendering to the Germans?

For one unworthy moment
pected Rudolph Kreisler again.
stantly afterward reminded her
had told her with his own lips
be American.

Then the heavens opened and
came. It was a terrible, terrible
but children and substitute ma
how to live through it, and aft
time the gong sounded for the
school.

The children of the other grad
out. Tramp—tramp—it sounded
a host in retreat!

Then quiet!—with the third-gr
silent in their seats, trying to c
many thousand years it would t
long clock-hand to move half-wa
dial again.

Louise began wondering at jus
Rudolph Kreisler would steal or

ing and break for home. The rain had stopped, and she hoped and believed that the little German would make good his escape before the third grade had finished serving sentence.

Suddenly Luke, raising his hand, asked of the substitute:

“May I speak to Billy Hastings on business?”

The substitute was writing something and assented without looking up. Louise could not help hearing the hoarsely whispered “business.”

“Connie Tipton,” said Luke to Billy, “says that that German spy has been hiding in the basement but has slipped up-stairs—” The hoarse whisper dropped lower at this point and Louise could not catch the words which followed. She guessed darkly, however, and clung to her desk tighter and tighter.

At that fateful moment the substitute looked up and said:

“Children, the others have all gone, and it looks like rain again, so I am going to dis-

UNDER THE

1

miss you. File out quietly—
have to call you back.”

She did not rise from her seat, but she turned them out, taking care that they were out of sight of them before he slackened his pace and dropped her eyes to her writing. They left them practically to their own devices.

The boys marched through the room first, and they were not talking about it.

Then the little girls rose. Louise led the girls' line, but she moved swiftly in the wake of the boys, who had disappeared off the face of the earth when she reached the cloak-room, which opened into the hall.

They had slipped off to hunt for the boys. Kreisler, and Louise knew it, but she was not sure that Rudolph had left the building.

Something must be done—
Just then she caught from a group of tiptoeing and whispering.

It was dishonorable to "tattle," but it wasn't dishonorable to fly after a set of lawless boys and keep them from abusing an innocent would-be American. Louise deserted the head of her line and darted up the long stairs.

It was like a frightful nightmare—the stealthy, breathless chase which followed. She could not stop the boys in their mad search, could not command their attention a moment to explain. In and out they darted—fourth-grade, fifth-grade, sixth-grade, seventh! Every crack and cranny, every cloak-room and teacher's desk was made to prove its innocence of sheltering the fugitive spy. The scampering boys were just finishing their search of the seventh grade when Louise found herself at the foot of the garret steps.

She stopped and surveyed their boxed-up secretiveness. What if Rudolph had gone up there?

From the sounds of disappointment now issuing from the seventh grade she knew that

UNDI

the last schoolroom
yielded up the qu
be in the garret, an
pursue him there!

Then a sudden
could but reach Ru
him to climb out c

Up the dark ste
were flying feet
seen, and were co

They caught up
the top, and she
garret room toge

It was big with
place—and weird
lights and whole
the children stood
some silence.

No German spy
Then the boys
and after a quick
lighter space befor
quest farther and
dark of the wings

Louise stood where they had left her, with the feeling that *the end of all things* was at hand, and that there was no use to struggle further. Presently her mist-dimmed eyes were attracted to a pile of something over at a small window near where she stood. The janitor had thrown their beautiful flag across an old couch without taking the trouble to roll it properly.

The indignant little girl started toward the couch to straighten out and roll the flag when her ear caught a sound which caused her to pause a moment in dim speculation. There was a step below, a firm, a familiar step—but no, she must be mistaken!

She slipped over to the couch, but the next moment drew back and clapped her hand over her mouth to repress a startled scream. A little yellow-haired boy lay asleep upon the couch, with the big flag nearly covering him!

Louise leaned over him. Two shining drops still lay on his cheek. He had sobbed himself to sleep—he was such a *little* boy!

A drift of damp air floated in from the



“You can’t touch Rudolph!” she cried. “He’s under the flag!”



UNDER THE FL

window, and the sleeper shiv as if to cuddle further un Louise very gently drew th closer about his neck. Son that this was not desecration

That steady step from be! nearer!

But just at that moment noisily back from the dis gables.

“Hello, Louise! What there?” Luke Musgrove cal

Louise started up. She v and the sleeping boy, but sh him from their astonished e

“Gee, but there he is!”

“Let’s——”

But the spirit of a long li Americans was facing the was descended from ancesto freedom and fair play with that hour—when she fac lawless—there was a som which brought them to a

“You can’t touch Rudolph!” she cried.
“He’s under the flag!”

A quiet fell upon them. They looked first at the sacred, sheltering flag of their country, and then at each other. And while they yet paused in awe there came to them the sound of a steady, familiar step on the garret stair. The next moment the door opened and there entered Miss Barclay—the teacher who, by her wisdom and her justice, could always command to stillness the tempests of their childish hearts.

AMERICA FIRST

LITTLE Riego Yañez was a native of Mexico—of that unhappy part of Mexico which is constantly plundered by revolutionary bands who spend their time in fighting, and who win their supplies by robbing the more stable people of the republic.

Riego's father, Antonio Yañez, had suffered many times at the hands of the revolutionists. He was a saddler by trade, and also a small farmer, so the products of his industry were just what the warring bandits needed. But the warring bandits did not pay for what they needed. They merely took, and rode away!

So Antonio decided on a desperate step—he would emigrate to America.

But Riego's mother objected to removing to America. Mexico was rife with hatred and distrust of the "gringos," and many and dark were the stories told of the country north of the Great North River. Besides, Riego's

elder brother, Pascual, an unruly lad of fifteen, was very bitterly opposed to the change.

So it was at length decided that Antonio should dare alone the dangers and hardships of America. If all was as the revolutionists said, he could escape back to Chihuahua. If, by happy chance, he should prosper in the new country, he would send for wife and children.

A year passed. The father's letters—few and short, for he had had little schooling—were chiefly concerned with begging them to come and see for themselves.

Then, one never-to-be-forgotten day, the mother and children packed into a hired wagon the tragic little which the bandits had left them, and set their faces toward the Rio Grande. They, too, were bound for that distrusted country which lay north of the northern edge of their world. The mother and the two girls were hopeful, but Pascual was silent and Riego afraid.

Not till the night came down did they reach the dark river which was to flow forever be-

tween the old life and the new. To little ten-year-old Riego this all-pervading darkness meant "America," for to his drowsy brain and anxious heart the black clouds above and the darkly rolling waters below seemed to typify the spirit of the land into which he was crossing.

Another moment, however, and he had given up the struggle to think it all out and fallen asleep with his head on his mother's lap.

The next morning Riego waked up in a better land.

He sat up on his cot and blinked his black eyes and stared about him at the cosy little room. A flood of light poured in at the one tiny window— Then the sun *did* shine in this land of the gringos!

This was very interesting. Riego hurried into his clothes and started out to see America.

His route of exploration led through a cheery kitchen, where he found his two sisters busy cooking breakfast, and smiling and chatting at their work. But Riego had no

time to stop and question, for the green things in the little garden beyond were beckoning to him.

In another minute he was out among them. It was very green—this “America”—very green and very sunny, with rows upon rows of the most wonderful vegetables running out to meet the morning sun!

Soon Riego glimpsed his father and mother beyond a dividing fence at the side, and he ran at once to his father’s arms. After the first long embrace Riego drew back, the better to see the father who had dared America alone for his children’s sake.

Why—his brow was smoother than Riego remembered!—his eyes clearer!— Did one grow younger, happier, in America?

And now Riego’s mother was calling his attention to the snow-white chickens which fluttered about them. There was a cow, too, Riego learned—a cow and a pony and pigs and pigeons—and *all theirs!*

Riego shouted for joy. But the next moment the joy died upon his lips, and he asked:

AMERICA FIR

"The revolutionists, fat will they let us have these?"

"Riego," said his father revolutionists in America. works, he receives a just r

allowed to keep in peace wh only danger is from across

Then Riego's mother to father had a fine saddle Americans never raided.

It was all very, very wor was paid well for working, peace what he earned!— meant by "*America*"?

Riego's father's saddle-s room of their little dwelling

mediately upon a small stre esting place, indeed, for th

the hospitable bench just many an entertaining visi men who came to buy sa their harness repaired.

One of these visitors, Alo

particularly interesting to Riego and his brother, though their father always became moodily quiet when the man came. Lorente was a big, dashing fellow, full of strange oaths and of dark insinuations. And somehow, whenever he entered, the air of the shop became electric with an indefinable excitement.

It did not take Riego long to see that, at such times, his father managed to keep him and Pascual so busy that they missed most of their hero's inspiring talk. Riego was particularly unfortunate in this respect. He spent little of his time in the shop where his father and Pascual plied the saddler's trade, for it was his duty to help in the market-garden.

This deprivation of Lorente's society, however, had its compensations. It was Riego's especial work to peddle their vegetables at the khaki tents of the gringo soldiers a few miles away, and this was very entertaining and exciting in itself, for the soldiers were jolly and kind and said nice things to one.

AMERICA FIRST

And then, one rainy Saturday when the peddling was all done, he went to his father's shop and listened to the news. And Alonzo Lorente was awake with the news that came from the land of America. of "gringos" and of "vengeance."

Pascual, Riego noticed, was closer to the big man, till the leather they should have been.

It was then that the uncle. The father, usually so quiet, suddenly rose from his work-bench.

"Lorente," he said, and Pascual started at the iron in his hand. "not the busy men who have built America. It is those who are doing much talking!"

There was a pause and then Lorente the magnificent man, on his heel with a growl and left the shop.

Then Antonio returned to the shop with Riego following, but F

door and gazed at the receding Lorente till his father called him sharply to his duties.

One day the father did not open his shop at all. It was closed in honor of the great American festival, Riego heard him explain grimly to a follower of Lorente, who questioned. And Riego heard the follower of Lorente laugh scornfully as he strode away.

There being no work that day, Pascual and Riego set out together to explore the yet farther reaches of America.

But they had not gone far past the square where loomed the several American stores when they sighted a crowd in a grove of big trees, and heard voices shouting and hands clapping as if in great joy. A number of gringo soldiers were roving about. Two were coming leisurely toward them across the green.

Riego wanted to press forward to see and hear, but his brother jerked him by the sleeve, exclaiming:

“It is the Americans’ great feast-day, the Fourth of July. Come away!”

AMERICA

"But father says we
Why can't we go and
saying?" Riego's voice
eagerness.

The approaching soldier
looked at him, and Riego's

But the taller of the soldiers
in fine fashion, and addressed
of courteous welcome:

"Don Pedro de Alvarado
Sitting-Bull, for such as I
nic! Welcome to our city.

Riego understood the gesture.
He thanked the courtly soldier
proudly forward, followed

It was a gay scene, but
one was speaking. The
America fluttered everywhere
white-faced señoritas and boys
were gathered here and there
groups. Under a tree, near
musicians with shining silver
drum. A number of children
the grass in front of the station.

Riego noticed, were many dark faces like his own.

Suddenly Riego's courage gave way and he started to retreat. But a sweet-faced señora took him by the hand and led him and Pascual to a place where they could see everything, whispering as they went:

“It is our day of freedom.”

At first the boy was dazed by the strangeness of the scene, and his interest shifted. But the sound of a sweet, ringing voice soon compelled his attention and he turned quickly toward the platform.

Riego caught his breath. Who was it? *What* was it that was speaking to him?

In the centre of the platform stood a clear-eyed, white-faced goddess, with the flag of the new country draped around her slender form, and the sunlight of this day of freedom beating down upon her shining head. She was speaking, but in the difficult new tongue.

Riego could not take his eyes away, but he reached out his hand quickly to touch Pascual.

The sweet-faced señora leaned over him.

AMERICA FIRST

"America," she whispered in
America! Beautiful America!
forward, unconscious now of
around. Oh, to *understand* Ame

Then a strange thing happened
tiful goddess suddenly ceased s;
her face became clouded with th
eyes were focussed on the eager l
crept forward and was standing
before her—the most conspicu
group of dark-faced, bewildered c

Riego did not know that every
audience had suddenly leaned forv
silence.

After one tense moment the Be
advanced to the edge of the platf
scended the steps till she stood ab
them.

And now this strange, new, bet
was speaking to Riego in his own

"You didn't understand me, did
asked in Spanish.

"Not *then*, my lady!—but now
Riego who answered her, but now th

faces were alight like his own now. The crowd was leaning forward again.

“Ah, that is all the trouble!” said the Beautiful One. “Our new people simply do not understand America! Do you wish me to tell you the story in Spanish?”

There were many who answered this time.

Then she told them in their own tongue of the great struggle for a new freedom and a new peace which had been waged upon this soil over a hundred years before. And the breathless children heard how this new ideal of freedom had passed all bounds of the country in which it was born, and thrilled all lands. They heard how the noble La Fayette of France, Steuben of Prussia, and Kosciuszko of Poland each had offered his all that America might be forever a refuge for the oppressed. They learned how the German De Kalb had laid down his life at Camden for the new faith, and how Count Pulaski had poured out the last drop of his Polish blood to make the world's great dream of freedom “come true.”

AMERICA FI

Then the **Beautiful One** how, throughout the more t years since the fight was v and oppressed of many land America work and a just rew the freedom to do anything harm another, and the great

"And now," exclaimed the s of you will promise with me America? **Stand up !**"

And they stood up—the da white-faced señoritas, the grin all!—and repeated after the

**"I pledge allegiance to n
the republic for which
One nation, indivisible, wit
justice for all."**

When **Riego** turned from the in it was to see his brother Pasc away, and in close conversation v Lorente.

The days passed, but Riego still in his heart his first vision of Am

knew now that the Beautiful One was only a charming señorita and daughter of the big captain who commanded at the American camp. But he liked to think of her as "America"—the beneficent goddess who had smoothed the furrows from his father's brow and crowned his faithful labors with reward.

And then, one momentous day, the Beautiful One stood in the shop-door, asking in Spanish if she might be allowed to enter. She was all in white this time—snow-white. To Riego's fond imagination she was still a shining goddess.

Riego's father welcomed the señorita and dusted the bench that she might sit and rest, for Riego had told him of the great American festival, and Antonio had learned much besides.

The señorita had come to speak to the father about his sons—and her smiling glance included both the sullen Pascual and Riego, who stood worshipfully by.

It seemed that the señorita—Miss Flora Arden was her name—was to teach a class of

“newly made Americans,”
 glance included the boys.
 teach them to speak the
 and to help them to a better
 of America. The señorita be
 of the trouble which the ne
 cans encountered was due
 they did not know how to
 good gifts which their nev
 offer. And she was certain
 trouble they gave was beca
 old prejudices with them, an
 their hearts to America.

Riego understood the spir
 better than he did the word
 Spanish. His father listened
 thoughtful, grave attention.

There were no charges to
 teaching? Then what was
 gain for so much effort?

“I?” said the señorita
 now, ready to depart—“I
 try! My father is a
 country by helping to

“I
 was
 ai
 er
 p

this troubled border. If I had been a son I might have done as much. But I am only a daughter, Antonio! And yet"—and she put her arm over Riego's shoulders as she spoke—"if I help to make loyal even *one* of America's adopted sons, am not I, too, serving my country?"

The father's rare smile assented to her offer, even before his lips made the promise.

Riego followed the Beautiful One to the door.

Outside, Alonzo Lorente slouched against a lamp-post. The señorita looked into Lorente's face and recoiled slightly. Riego saw the recoil, and an unnamed fear suddenly laid its hand upon his heart.

Pascual and Riego went to Miss Arden's class—Pascual sullen and uninterested, Riego breathlessly eager. But they had not attended many times—indeed, had just begun to glimpse something of the bigness and goodness of their new country—when the stroke fell that was to change their little world.

AMERICA

FIRST

The good father dropped speechless and bewildered. The father said he would be able that his mind would never

Their wise father thus reduced to business, and their mother ignorant of conditions and the new tongue, the left to plan for themselves.

Pascual left Miss Arden's class. He explained that he would now have charge of his father's shop; but he feared to make many trips across the Grande and to talk much with Lore. He now resumed his old practice of dropping at the shop to chat. His younger brother, however, continued under the señor's instruction.

Riego learned at Miss Arden's class that "freedom" gives one the right to do as one wishes only in so far as he does not interfere with the rights of another.

"There is no 'freedom' except in obedience to law," she told him one day. "America is a 'free' country because—the

are gathered people from all lands—they join together in making laws which are kind and impartial to all, and they stand together in support of the laws they make.”

“But, señorita, Alonzo Lorente says—” began the boy, and stopped short.

“What does Alonzo Lorente say?” the señorita asked quickly.

“I—I promised not to tell,” stammered the child.

There was the blue truth of heaven in the señorita’s eyes as she looked into his own, and answered: “Riego, it is more than dishonest in Lorente to accept the blessings which America affords him and not be true to her. It is worse than traitorous in him to help spoil the peace of the country which is his refuge from oppression. If Alonzo Lorente likes the old way better than the new, he should go back to the old country. If he honestly wishes to change what he finds here, and thinks he can better things, he has one man’s just share in deciding, for he is a naturalized citizen and can vote on any ques-

tion. But Alonzo Lorente *should speak out openly or else keep silent!*”

Before Riego left that afternoon Miss Arden had him repeat with her:

“I pledge allegiance to my flag and to
the republic for which it stands,
One nation, indivisible, with liberty and
justice for all.”

But little Riego did not dream in how short a time would his loyalty to his new country be tested. One afternoon—his father was still lying unconscious—Riego was tending the shop alone, for Pascual had crossed the Rio Grande in the early morning and had not yet returned.

It was a dull, dull afternoon, for no patrons came, and the visitors merely glanced in and passed on. It was hot and still, so the sleepy Riego decided to rest. He found a cool spot behind a pile of boxes, and lay down and closed his eyes.

When Riego opened his eyes again it was

with a start. There were voices—smothered voices—some men were in the shop! Riego lay still and listened.

“We will attack the gringo camp to-night—just before dawn,” a smothered voice was saying. “Alva has three hundred men and more. They can easily surprise and destroy these eighty Americans, and so can seize their horses and ammunition.”

“But the patrol?” It was Pascual’s voice that whispered the question. Riego’s heart turned sick. He recognized the voice of Lorente in the terrifying reply:

“Pacheco and a picked few will knife the patrol at the ford, then Alva’s men will cross, and approach the camp up the ravine.”

“To-morrow morning?” Pascual’s voice asked.

“Yes, just before dawn.”

There were approaching steps on the street.

A customer entered. Riego heard Lorente departing—heard the customer inquire the price of a saddle, and go out.

It must be done *now*—now while Pascual

was alone, and he could speak. At the next moment Riego stood before him.

"I heard you!" he cried. "You must not!"

But Pascual laid a fierce hand on his breast and pinned him to the wall.

It was a terrible scene—terrible in the tense quiet of the moment—terrible in its outcome!

With Riego pinned against the wall, he needs must listen, Pascual pouring into his ears such a torrent of abuse, of falsehoods, of the "gringos" that at length the blood leapt in the younger man's veins and went beating through his brain.

The gringos were their enemies. The men who were coming down upon them with the dawn were of their own country! What if they were "revolutionists"? Were they not Americans? Talk of "loyalty"—one man's loyalty to one's own!

When Pascual loosed his grip upon Riego, it was after he had stirred

dregs all that was passionate, all that was ignorant and prejudiced and violent, in the boy's nature.

That afternoon Riego did not report at Miss Arden's class, but long after class hour he was obliged to pass her house on the mission to deliver a mended harness to a farmer living near the American camp.

Miss Arden and her mother, Riego knew, were the only members of the big captain's family. They lived in a large house in the woods, half-way between the town and the camp. He knew also that the big captain stayed in camp.

As Riego emerged from the long stretch of lonely woods which separated Miss Arden's house from the town, and as he faced the other long stretch of woods which lay between him and the camp, the boy was struck by the isolation of the señorita's home.

He reflected, however, that Alva's men were to attack the gringo soldiers by way of the ford, and that the ford lay to the right yonder, far out of connection with the cap-

tain's house. He was glad—glad that Alva's men would not come that way!

Suddenly he spied the señorita herself. She was standing on the steps of her father's home. Riego's heart bounded within him at sight of her. He pulled down his hat and hoped to pass unrecognized, but the sweet, familiar voice called:

"Riego!"

He did not answer.

Then she ran down the steps to him, and put her gentle hands upon him, turning him to her against his will.

"What is the matter, Riego?" she asked.

No answer.

"You didn't come to class this afternoon."

No answer.

"I'm sorry," she said, after a moment of silence in which she looked searchingly into his face, "because we had an interesting lesson to-day. It was all about what one ought to do in case one should be forced to choose between the old land and the new."

The boy gave a swift, upward glance at

her, then dropped his eyes to the ground again. Miss Arden continued, and her voice was very serious now:

“And we decided, Riego, that one ought to think out carefully which country was really the better, and be true to that, because there is a higher duty than that to party or country, and that is—to the principles of justice and freedom.”

Riego's head sank lower. The Beautiful One took one of his brown hands into her own.

“And we said”—was she looking into the dark heart of him?—“that whichever way one chose, one should choose *openly*. Now this little brown hand could never——”

But the little brown hand was snatched away, and with a great sob the child fled into the woods.

When at last that night Riego did fall asleep he dreamed that his beautiful America came to him with her white arms held out in appeal, and that he slipped a dagger out of his bosom and stabbed her to the heart.

He started, awake, and sat up. It was black dark.

Had Alva struck already? Or was there yet time?

Ten feet away was Pascual's cot—he must not wake Pascual! As still as death he slipped out of his bed, pulled on his overalls that he had hung near, and crept out into the moonless night.

Riego could not think—it was all so desperate! He could only respond to the heart that was in him, and creep forward through the dark. But his feet knew the road that he took, though his brain was reeling. He was going straight to the one who had wakened the new loyalty in him—his beautiful America!

“I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the republic for which it stands,” went surging through him as he struggled on.

Riego was not grandly heroic; he was only a frightened little boy, but determined now to do his loyal best for the country that had sheltered him from oppression. And so,

though the treacherous sands might seek to drag him down, though the dark chaparral yonder might hide—any fearsome thing!—Riego went forward.

And now the house of the big captain loomed black before him. Riego stole up the front steps. He knew behind which of the long, closed windows the señorita slept, and he approached and tapped fearfully upon it.

It was a frightened voice that called: “Who is *that*?”

Riego was not conscious how he answered, but he knew that a wave of relief flowed over him when the blind of the long window opened and he was drawn into the dark room by a pair of familiar hands.

The blind was closed after him and a light was struck.

The señorita’s eyes were disclosed big and startled; her face was as white as the long robe she wore.

“What *is* it, Riego?” she gasped.

“They are coming!” he whispered.

"Who?" she exclaimed, catching him by the shoulders, "*Who?*"

"Alva," the boy answered, "and three hundred with him. They are going to surprise—our soldiers—and kill them while they sleep!"

The señorita sprang to the telephone. She pulled down the lever many, many times, then she staggered back against the wall.

"They have cut the wires!" she cried. "Riego, you and I must take the warning!"

"To the camp?" the boy cried in dismay.

"Yes, there's no one within a mile of here that could take it but us!"

"But the Mexicans have spies over there," the boy moaned. "They will find us in the dark with their knives!"

She had flung on a long cloak, and was hurriedly fastening her shoes.

"Then you stay here and I'll go," she said.

"*You?*" cried the startled child—then—

“It is dark out there, my lady; I’ll go with you.”

They extinguished the light and stole out together to the stable, but the horses were gone!

Desperate now, they started out afoot.

The treacherous sand again and the black dark! But they crept along together. Then suddenly the boy’s courage gave way and he clung to the cloaked figure, sobbing:

“Señorita! Señorita! I am *afraid!*”

The señorita was trembling, too, and her voice broke as she whispered:

“You and I don’t make very good heroes, do we?”

They had come to a standstill and were clinging together in the dark. Suddenly there was a sound of something approaching—the velvet tread of an unshod pony in the sand!

The rider passed.

When they breathed again the señorita took him strongly by the shoulders.

“Riego,” she whispered—and there was no break in her voice now—“we must separate.

One of us must go straight to the ford and warn the patrol, the other to camp."

"But it is near the ford that Pacheco is hiding," the boy replied.

"I'll go to the ford," she said simply.

"No, my lady, *I* go—you take the news to camp." And before she could detain him the boy turned at a sharp angle and plunged into the deeper blackness of the chaparral.

A long nightmare intervened between their parting and the time when the half-dead boy clung to the saddle of the patrol and whispered to him:

"Keep to the open, señor; there are men with knives in the chaparral! Help is coming!"

Then, somehow, everything was blotted out for Riego.

When consciousness came again to the boy, the cool air of the dawn was choked with dust clouds till he could not see ten feet before him and his ears were nearly bursting with the thunder-beat of frantic hoofs. Dim horses

were rearing and plunging against the reddening dawn. There were shouts and cries and firing! Firing!

Who was losing? Who was *winning*?

Dear God, Alva's men were sweeping back across the Rio Grande!

One little frightened boy had saved the day for the country that had given him refuge from oppression.

But what was that? A call for help? *Whose voice was that?*

Riego plunged into the thick of the dust cloud toward the cry, and dropped by Pascual's side. How could he have known that his brother would ride that night with the invaders!

But Pascual was striving to speak. Riego leaned over him and caught the whisper:

"Lorente shot me down to get my horse and escape!"

And now the gringos were circling round the wounded one—they would beat out his brains with their guns! But—but—why, they were lifting him up, and *tenderly!* The

Americans were lifting up his wounded brother!

Many and bewildering were the things which happened to Riego in the next few hours. First, he and the all-but-dead Pascual were carried by the soldiers to the American camp. Then his brother was taken away from him and borne into a closed tent.

The soldiers gathered around Riego and patted him on the shoulder. They gave him many things—things to eat and coins and pocket-knives and tobacco-tags, all the while challenging him to smile—he whose captured brother was yonder!

Later the big captain sent for him and took him by the hand.

“Riego Yañez,” he said, “I am proud to shake hands with an American hero!”

At length a tall soldier came to Riego and led him to the closed tent. But the tall soldier did not enter; he merely pushed the boy inside the tent and dropped the khaki flap.

Riego blinked his eyes. Somebody was lying stretched out on a cot, and somebody was fanning him—the Beautiful One and his brother! Riego crept toward her suddenly outstretched hands.

Then he leaned over Pascual. But Pascual's eyes were closed and on his face was a yellow pallor.

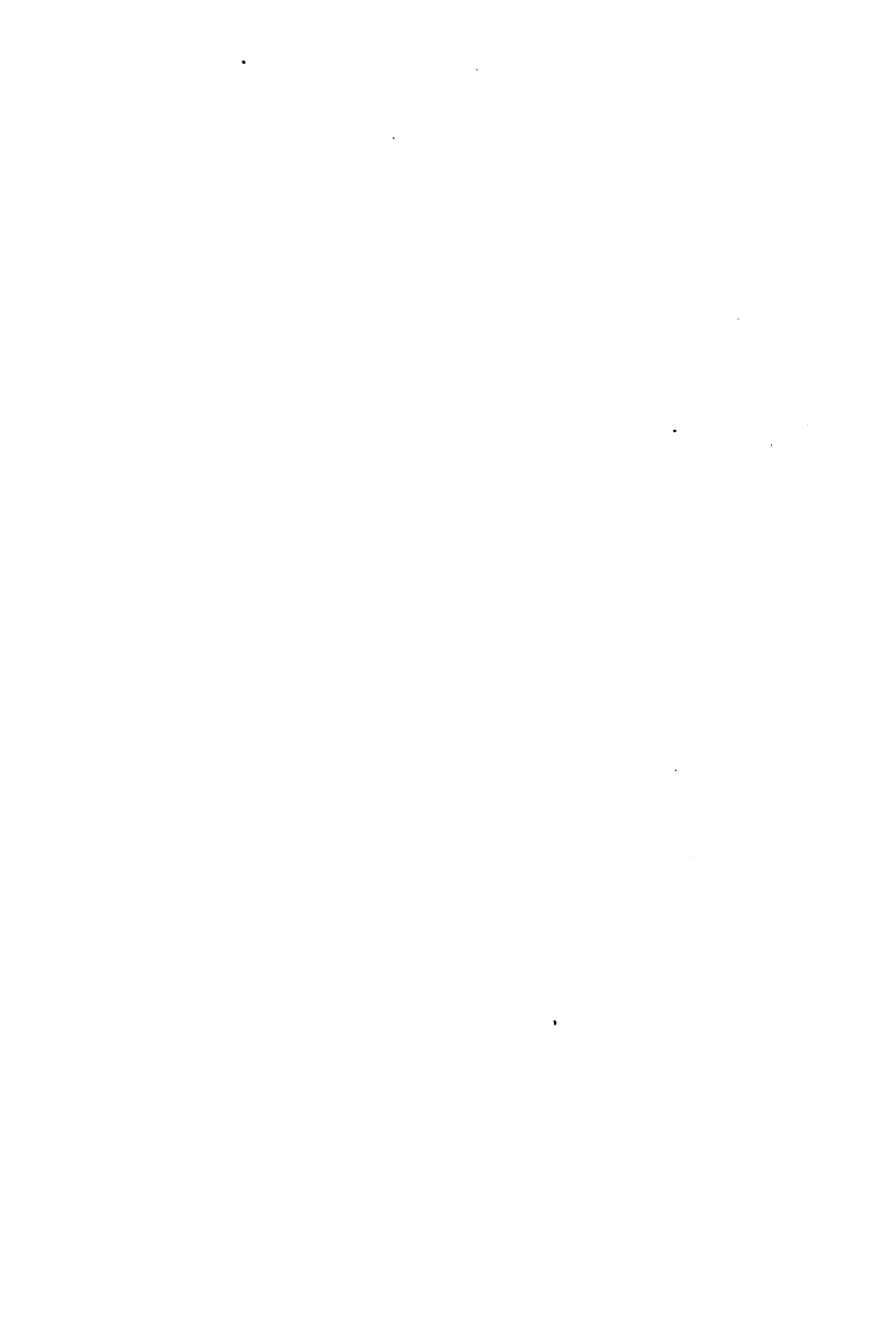
“The surgeon has taken out the ball,” whispered the Beautiful One. “He will live, with good nursing, and I am on the job.” She paused a moment, then asked, as she looked into his face with concern: “Aren't you happy, you tragic little soldier? Why don't you smile at the good news?”

“How—” began the child—and a strange, sick feeling swept over him—“how long before he will be well enough to be stood against a wall—and——”

“Why, you poor child!”—and the big tears sprang to the señorita's eyes—“your brother will not be stood against a wall and shot for treason—never—*never!* And he's not going to be shut up in prison, either!”



“Riego Yañez,” he said, “I am proud to shake hands with an American hero!”



“But why, señorita? Why? The big captain knows that he was with Alva’s men.”

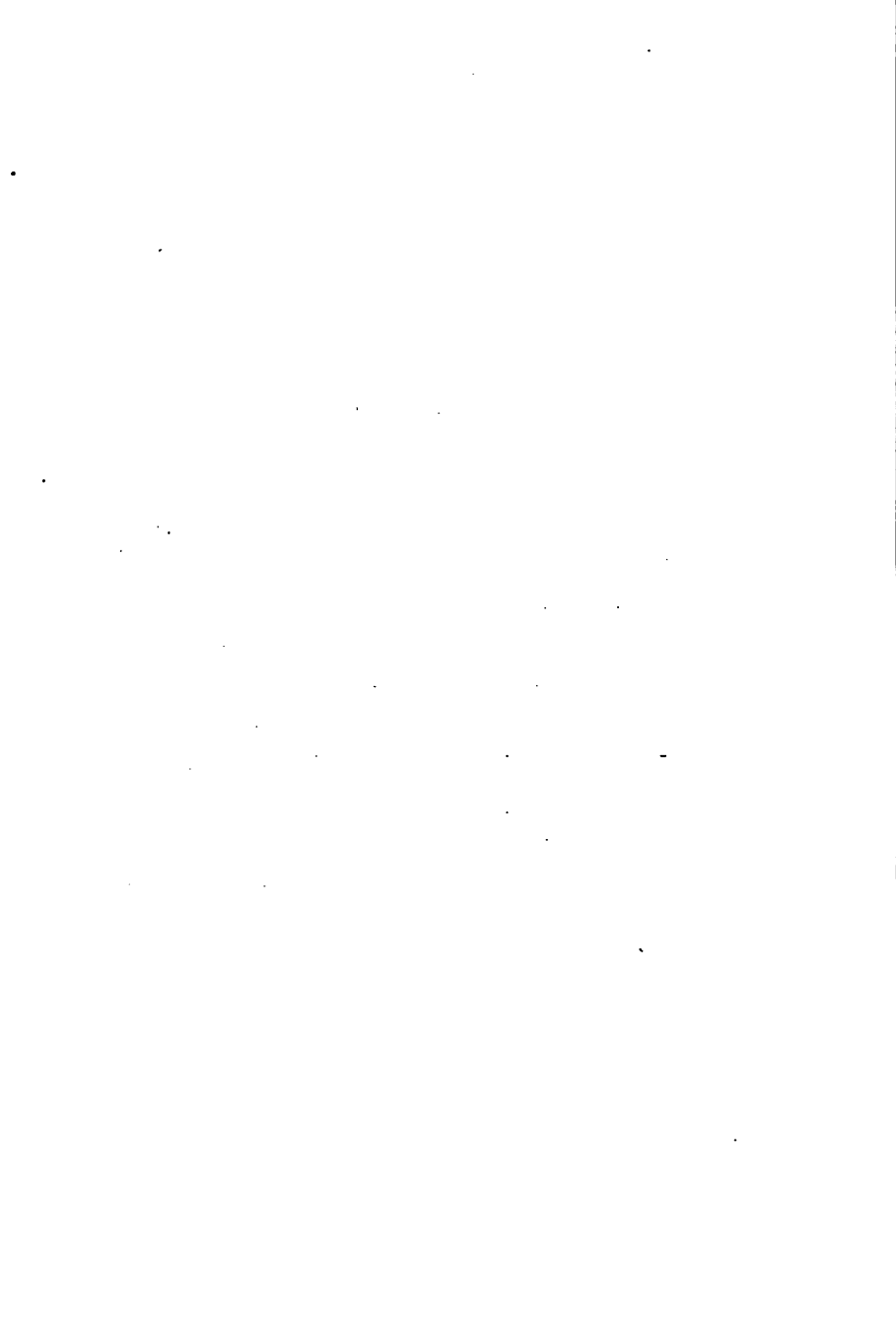
“He is young—just a boy,” and the señorita laid a tender hand upon the head of the wounded lad. “He is the son of good parents and brother to— Oh, you tragic little soldier, can’t you guess who it is has saved your brother?”

“*You, señorita?*”

“*Yourself, Riego.* Because you have been heroically loyal they are to give your brother another chance. We Americans, Riego”—and her white hand closed upon his own to include him with her—“we Americans are going to nurse Pascual back to a better life and teach him how to be free!”

The sick lad stirred on his cot.

When the Beautiful One leaned over him in quick solicitude, he smiled.



THE SCRIBNER SERIES of SCHOOL READING

Illustrated. 12mo. Each 56 cents

A uniform supplementary reading series, specially edited for use in elementary schools and carefully graded in accordance with results obtained from actual tests in the class room. The main purpose of this series is to introduce into the class room the best literature, particularly the writings of those contemporary American authors who naturally appeal to young people, and to bring this excellent literature within the reach of all schools by offering the books at a very moderate price. The volumes are profusely illustrated, and handsomely and durably bound.

Fanciful Tales. By FRANK R. STOCKTON. Edited by JULIA E. LANGWORTHY. Illustrated.

Hans Brinker. By MARY MAPES DODGE. Illustrated.

A Child's Garden of Verses. By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. Illustrated.

Some Merry Adventures of Robin Hood. By HOWARD PYLE. Illustrated by the author.

America First. By FRANCES NIMMO GREENE. Illustrated.

The Hoosier School Boy. By EDWARD EGGLESTON. Illustrated.

Krag and Johnny Bear. Being the Personal Histories of Krag, Randy, Johnny Bear, and Chink. By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON. Illustrated.

Lobo, Rag, and Vixen. Selections from "Wild Animals I Have Known." By ERNEST THOMPSON SETON. With 4 full-page and many other illustrations from drawings by the Author.

Hero Tales Told in School. By JAMES BALDWIN. Illustrated.

The Page Story Book. Selections for School Reading by THOMAS NELSON PAGE. Edited by FRANK E. SPALDING and CATHERINE T. BRYCE.

The van Dyke Book. Selections for School Reading. By HENRY VAN DYKE. Edited and arranged by Professor EDWIN MIMS, with Biographical Sketch by MISS VAN DYKE. Illustrated.

The Howells Story Book. By WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS. Selected and arranged by MARY E. BURT. Illustrated by Miss HOWELLS.

- The Eugene Field Book.** Verses, Stories, and Letters for School Reading. By EUGENE FIELD. Edited by MARY E. BURT and MARY L. CABLE. With an Introduction by GEORGE W. CABLE. Illustrated.
- The Lanier Book.** Selections for School Reading. By SIDNEY LANIER. Edited and arranged by MARY E. BURT, in co-operation with MRS. LANIER. Illustrated.
- The Cable Story Book.** Selections for School Reading. By GEORGE W. CABLE. Edited by MARY E. BURT and LUCY L. CABLE. Illustrated.
- The Roosevelt Book.** Selections from the writings of Theodore Roosevelt, with an introduction by ROBERT BRIDGES. Illustrated.
- Things Will Take a Turn.** By BEATRICE HARRADEN. Illustrated.
- Around the World in the Sloop Spray.** By Captain JOSHUA SLOCUM. Illustrated.
- Twelve Naval Captains.** With portraits. By MOLLY ELLIOTT SEAWELL.
- Poems of American Patriotism.** Chosen by BRANDER MATTHEWS.
- Children's Stories of American Literature, 1660-1860.** By HENRIETTA CHRISTIAN WRIGHT.
- Children's Stories of American Literature, 1860-1896.** By HENRIETTA CHRISTIAN WRIGHT.
- Children's Stories in American History.** By HENRIETTA CHRISTIAN WRIGHT.
- Children's Stories in American Progress.** By HENRIETTA CHRISTIAN WRIGHT.
- Herakles, the Hero of Thebes, and Other Heroes of the Myth.** By MARY E. BURT and ZENAIDE RAGEZIN. Illustrated.
- Odysseus: The Hero of Ithaca.** By MARY E. BURT. Illustrated.
- The Boy General.** By MRS. GEORGE A. CUSTER and MARY E. BURT. Illustrated.
- Don Quixote De La Mancha.** By MIGUEL DE CERVANTES. From the translations of Duffield and Shelton. By MARY E. BURT and LUCY LEFFINGWELL CABLE.

